



STORMWATER UTILITY RATES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE UTILITY RATES?

Utility rates support the continued efforts to increase the capacity and reliability of the city's water resources, sanitation and stormwater operations, maintenance and infrastructure. Revenues from rates are directly tied to the costs of the specific utility they support. Revenues from Stormwater rates only support the cost of Stormwater functions, Water Resources rates only support Water Resources functions, and Sanitation rates only support Sanitation functions. Utility rates are evaluated on an annual basis with any required adjustments to rates typically going into effect on October 1.

WHY DO I PAY FOR STORMWATER SERVICE?

Stormwater fees support the Clean Water Act of 1972. Fees are directly related to stormwater functions and assist with planning, operations and maintenance of stormwater systems. These functions also help control flooding, enhance water quality and minimize the environmental impact of stormwater pollution.

WHAT IS AN IMPERVIOUS SURFACE?

An impervious surface is any surface that does not allow water to seep into the ground. For example, roofing and driveways.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH MY STORMWATER RATE?

The City will be implementing a tiered billing structure for stormwater rates to single-family residential properties upon City Council approval. Prior to adoption, all single-family residential properties will be charged \$11.00 per month, and all non-single-family residential properties will be charged based on the square footage of their property's impervious surface area, or area that does not allow water to seep into the ground. This new tiered structure will distribute costs to single-family residential properties based on the amount of square feet of impervious surface area on their property.

Each single-family residential property will be assigned to the appropriate tier based on analysis of infrared aerial photography that distinguishes hard, impervious surfaces (like roofing and driveways) from areas that can absorb stormwater (like lawns and gardens). This analysis of impervious area was conducted for all properties in the city, including non-single-family residential properties, and was a one-time evaluation. However, properties will be reevaluated with any permit issued that would impact the impervious surface area of a property.



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PRELIMINARY SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL IMPERVIOUS AREA TIERS & RATES

	MINIMUM IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREA	MAXIMUM IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREA	MONTHLY RATE
TIER 1	1 sq. ft.	1,600 sq. ft.	\$4.99
TIER 2	1,601 sq. ft.	3,200 sq. ft.	\$9.93
TIER 3	3,201 sq. ft.	4,800 sq. ft.	\$15.59
TIER 4	4,801+ sq. ft.		\$23.27

Example of Single-Family Residential Property Fee Calculation:

Amount of impervious area = 1,800 square feet

Tier classification = Tier 2

Monthly stormwater rate = \$9.93

WHY ARE WE CHANGING THE RATE STRUCTURE?

The current rate structure treats single-family residential properties differently from all other properties. Currently, all single-family residential properties are billed the same amount – no matter how much (or how little) demand they place on the stormwater drainage system. All other properties are currently billed based on their stormwater contribution. The overall goal of this effort is to now charge all properties in the same, objective way. The new structure allows a property’s fee to more accurately reflect its impact to our stormwater system. Using impervious surface area is a widely accepted and recommended method of calculating fees.

HOW CAN I REVIEW MY IMPERVIOUS AREA AND PRELIMINARY STORMWATER RATE?

Your preliminary rate can be found through the **Stormwater Review and Appeals Portal** at stpete.org/ratechanges. You will be able to view your impervious surface area measurement and submit an appeal for remeasurement if desired. Directions are available to you within the portal on how to search for your property. The City has hosted public meetings to walk through the portal and appeals process.



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PUBLIC MEETINGS

April 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Willis S. Johns Rec Center
6635 Dr. Martin L King Jr St N

April 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
J. W. Cate Rec Center
5801 22nd Ave N

April 29, 6:30-8 p.m.
Childs Park Rec Center
4301 13th Ave S

April 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Lake Vista Rec Center
1401 62nd Ave S

April 25, 6:30-8 p.m.
Campbell Park Rec Center
601 14th St S

May 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
The Sunshine Center
330 5th St N

WILL THIS IMPACT CONDO OWNERS?

Impact to condo owners depends on the way utility billing is setup with the homeowner or condo association. If a community uses a master meter and includes utility fees in association fees, the change to the amount of association fees charged to condo owners is at the discretion of the association. If a condo owner has an individual meter and pays utilities directly to the City, the change in monthly payment will be directly tied to the impervious area and rate change.

WHAT ABOUT COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES?

Non-single-family residential properties (i.e. commercial properties) will continue to be charged a fee based on the number of Single-Family Residential Units (SFRU's) their impervious area represents. One SFRU is equal to the impervious surface area of a typical single-family residential property in the City, which has been preliminarily determined to be 2,406 square feet of impervious surface area.

The number of SFRU's that a commercial property represents will be multiplied by the stormwater rate per SFRU.

Example of SFRU Calculation (preliminary numbers):

- 1 SFRU = 2,406 square feet of impervious surface area
- Monthly rate per SFRU of \$9.93 (preliminary, subject to change)
- Commercial Property has 23,800 square feet of impervious surface
- 23,800 square feet of impervious surface area / 2,406 square feet per SFRU = 9.89 SFRU's
- 9.89 SFRU's x \$9.93 = \$98.21 monthly stormwater utility fee



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WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR FINALIZING THE FEES AND HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED?

City Council conducts a first reading of the proposed rate ordinance on **September 5, 2019** and considers the proposed rates for final adoption following a public hearing on **September 19, 2019**. Upon adoption, rates will become effective October 1, 2019. The adopted changes will be noted in your utility bill.

PUBLIC HEARING

September 19, 2019 at 6 p.m.

Sunshine Center

330 5th St. N

HOW CAN I SAVE MONEY?

WATER CONSERVATION REBATE AND PROGRAMS

The best way to minimize your utility bill is to use less water. St. Petersburg's Water Conservation Program offers tips, rebate programs and resources at stpete.org/waterconservation.

Starting October 1, 2019, upon City Council approval, additional rebates will be available to single-family residential utility customers who install certain devices that save water and help reduce the impact of a property's impact on the city stormwater system. These devices include rain barrels, rain totes and rain gardens. Check stpete.org/waterprograms for updates.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT UTILITY FEE CREDITS

The City of St. Petersburg offers two stormwater fee credits (reduction in stormwater fee) to utility customers that minimize stormwater runoff or improve the quality of stormwater runoff through approved practices. Since the stormwater impervious surface area measurements have been updated as part of the stormwater rate study, existing credits will no longer be in effect. Properties that have previously taken advantage of stormwater credits will need to reapply for consideration.

Who May Apply?

Non-single-family residential utility customers may apply. Single-family residential utility customers that are part of a larger common development or subdivision that has a privately-maintained stormwater facility permitted by Southwest Florida Water Management District may collectively apply.

Eligible applicants include:

- Commercial business properties
- Multi-family unit properties
- Industrial properties
- Government properties
- Condominiums/townhomes/traditional single-family home properties that all function off one metering system. *Contact your homeowner or neighborhood association representative to collectively apply. Applications will not be accepted from an individual single-family property that is metered separately.*





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Two credit programs are offered:

- **Stormwater Management System Credit:** Properties that operate and maintain onsite detention or retention stormwater management systems can receive a credit for reducing stormwater runoff impacts from the property to the City system.
- **Tidal Water Discharge Credit:** Properties that discharge directly into tidal waters to Boca Ciega Bay or Tampa Bay can receive a credit based on the area of the parcel discharging directly into eligible tidal waters treated to Outstanding Florida Waters criteria. Discharge to tidal waters cannot pass into or through City-maintained drainage systems.

More information and applications can be found at stpete.org/ratechanges.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Utility Assistance Program empowers St. Pete utility customers to make donations to help other utility customers experiencing financial hardships with their utility costs. Donations are made through the donor's utility bill and are distributed through a network of social service agencies. Assistance is limited and is administered by third-party agencies according to their respective eligibility criteria. Learn more at stpete.org/utilityassistance.

HOW CAN I GET IN TOUCH?

Contact the Stormwater Tier Rate Program at stormwater.appeals@stpete.org or call 727-893-7280.